

## POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

POLICY NUMBER:	POU080218000
POLICY NAME:	Support for Staff Members on Senior Governance and Consultative Bodies
DATE APPROVED:	27 February 2008
POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY:	University Governance
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Pro Vice Chancellor [Institutional Services]

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to stipulate the support for and responsibilities of staff on senior governance and consultative bodies within the institution.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

Exemplary governance is valued highly by Victoria University, and is an explicit objective in the Strategic Plan.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

**The Board:** the Education and Research Board. The Education and Research Board is created under *Statute 2.2 The Education and Research Board* and is responsible to Council for academic oversight of the University's research, academic programs and courses of study in Higher Education and Technical and Further Education.

**Council:** is the governing authority of the University and is responsible for the direction and superintendence of the University.

**Workplace Consultative Committee:** The WCC. The Workplace Consultative Committee is the mechanism by which the University consults with general and Higher Education staff about matters regarding implementation of their enterprise bargaining agreement.

**Victoria University Consultative Committee:** The VUCC. The Victoria University Consultative Committee is the mechanism by which the University consults with TAFE staff about matters regarding their enterprise bargaining agreement

### 4.0 KEY WORDS

senior governance and consultative bodies; support; and responsibilities.

## 5.0 POLICY

The general principles that are outlined below apply to staff members of the University who are members of senior governance and consultative bodies, which are defined for the purposes of this Code as:

- Council and/or its associated Committees;
- the Education and Research Board (ERB) and/or its associated Committees; and
- the Workplace Consultative Committee and the VU Consultative Committee.

These general principles, while broadly applicable to all staff, will find specific application in different forms for staff who are working at different levels within academic, TAFE teaching, general staff or management roles.

In noting the essentially voluntary nature of staff membership of governance and consultative bodies (other than *ex officio* membership), it is acknowledged that some proportion of the work associated with the obligations required by these bodies may exceed the broad level of time support offered by the University. Notwithstanding this, it is incumbent upon the University to endeavour to provide a supportive working environment in which staff members are encouraged to seek the opportunity to serve on governance and consultative bodies without actual or implied dissuasion, disadvantage or penalty.

### Obligations of members of governance bodies

It should be recognised by staff undertaking duties associated with membership of a governance or consultative body that their dedicated commitment to undertaking their responsibilities diligently and thoughtfully is an obligation of such membership.

More particularly, it should be recognised that the University requires members of any senior governance body to comply with the Commonwealth's National Governance Protocols, namely to:

- (a) act always in the best interests of the University as a whole, with this obligation to be observed in priority to any duty a member may owe to those electing or appointing him or her;
- (b) act in good faith, honestly and for a proper purpose;
- (c) exercise appropriate care and diligence;
- (d) not improperly use their position to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else; and
- (e) disclose and avoid conflicts of interest (with appropriate procedures for that purpose similar to those for public companies).

The obligations of membership of governance and consultative committees should include acting as a conduit for communicating to the University community more broadly the decisions and discussions of such committees, and taking a proactive stance in being available to participate in general duties associated with the good governance of the University (such as through membership of Discipline and Assessment Panels, or ad hoc working parties that may be convened from time to time).

Staff undertaking duties associated with membership of a governance body should aim to inform their line management of governance-related or consultative commitments (both regular meetings, but also irregular activities such as special meetings or ad hoc governance duties) as far in advance as possible to allow for appropriate coverage of other duties to be provided.

### Levels of Support

As a general principle, it is acknowledged that the time and effort spent by staff members in support of the governance and consultative activities of the University are critical to the success of the institution, and should be recognised and valued by managers and colleagues as an important part of its regular business. Such commitments should therefore be treated as an integral component within regular work arrangements as far as is practicable. This should include making relevant allowance within budget and work-planning processes so that elected members of the Board can be provided with the capacity to pursue their governance duties effectively.

It is acknowledged that the specific working arrangements for individual staff across the University are likely to vary considerably depending upon their sector, their duties, and the particular agreements they have negotiated with their line management. It is therefore not possible to be completely prescriptive in outlining the support to be offered by the University to any individual.

Nevertheless, the University undertakes to provide support to staff who are members of governance or consultative bodies by recognising as integral to the work of the University:

- reasonable time spent in reading agenda papers and consulting with colleagues as preparation for meetings;
- time spent in travelling to and attending meetings;
- the need for absence from other duties during the time when regular or special meetings of their governance body are taking place; and
- the need to provide the staff member with basic infrastructure to enable the governance activity to take place (e.g., workstation, computer and printer access, telephone access, secure storage space for governance papers).

The nature of the staff member's position and level of seniority will determine the time release or other support appropriate to their membership of a senior governance committee. Guidance on this matter is provided in Schedule 1 attached to this document.

It is strongly encouraged that, where a staff member has a regularly-scheduled meeting during a particular timeslot, all attempts are made to keep the timeslot clear of timetabled duties so as to minimise disruption. Furthermore, it is encouraged that the periods surrounding scheduled meetings are also kept free where possible to allow for travel and the possibility of meetings extending beyond the normally allocated time.

### **Committee Support**

The University undertakes (through the Governance and Policy Branch within the Pro Vice-Chancellor – Institutional Services portfolio) to provide committee support to the institution's senior governance bodies in the form of:

- provision of an executive officer / committee secretary to support the Chair, and to take and distribute minutes of any formally constituted meeting;
- preparation and dissemination of agenda papers in a timely way prior to any scheduled meeting;
- conduct of elections associated with membership of governance bodies;
- arrangement of appropriate venues for governance body meetings;
- provision of appropriate induction processes for new members of governance bodies, and facilitating on-going professional development in that area; and
- assisting in the broad dissemination of decisions of, and information about, the University's senior governance committees.

Similar support is offered through the resources of the Director – Human Resources for the work of the VUCC and the WCC.

### **Budget for Chair and Deputy Chair of the Education and Research Board**

In recognition of the special role they play in the governance of the institution, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Education and Research Board are provided with particular resources in order to undertake their duties. This includes access to an annual budget for expenses associated with the Board's activities, potentially including (although not limited to):

- funds to provide time-release for the Chair and Deputy Chair at the respective rate of six hours sessional-replacement time release plus on-costs (higher education), and 0.5 of the salary component of the appropriate Senior Educator level plus on-costs (TAFE); and

- a responsibility allowance for the Chair and Deputy Chair to undertake the duties associated with their roles, equivalent to 100% of the responsibility allowance for the Head of School of a mid-sized higher education School; and
- professional development expenses for members of the ERB and its committees;
- occasional expenses associated with reviews of academic governance-related activities within the institution; and
- incidentals (including tea, coffee, and minor expenses associated with the ERB and its committees).

The Chair and Deputy Chair are jointly responsible for submitting an annual budget plan to the Pro Vice-Chancellor – Institutional Services for endorsement.

#### **Adherence to these guidelines**

Where any staff member or line manager has a concern regarding the content or implementation of this Code, it should be addressed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Services), who will determine an appropriate mechanism for resolution of the concern.

### **7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

The National Governance Protocols for University Councils  
Policy - Professional Development for Members of Council  
Policy – Professional Development for Members and Office Bearers of Governance Boards and Committees

### **8.0 CONSULTATION**

Education and Research Board on 10 May 2006 endorsed the 'Code of Support for staff members on senior governance bodies'. This policy is an extension of that Code.

### **9.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

Upon receiving endorsement the Pro Vice Chancellor will arrange for copies of the Policy to be provided to the Chairs of the various bodies and invite them to disseminate it amongst their members.

### **10.0 POLICY ADVISOR**

Executive Officer, Education and Research Board  
Secretary for Council  
Pro Vice Chancellor [Institutional Services]

### **11.0 APPENDICES**

[Appendix One – Specific Suggested Time Allowance for Staff Categories of Governance Body Membership](#)

## Appendix One

### Specific Suggested Time Allowances for Staff Categories of Governance Body Membership

	<i>Category</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1.	TAFE Teaching Staff	<p>Where a staff member's annual work program is negotiated on a strict hourly basis, an allowance of 4-6 hours* per meeting (inclusive of preparation and travel time) should generally be used as an allocation to be disbursed in equal proportion against teaching and non-scheduled duties for service on governance or consultative committees. Where a staff member is a member of a senior governance body and an additional associated committee, in recognition of the likely overlap of deliberations, it is suggested that the minimum time in the above range be provided for the second commitment.</p> <p>* Because the average length of meetings and size of agendas associated with Council, ERB, and committees of the ERB are substantial, an allowance at the upper end of the stated ranges is more appropriate for these bodies; committees of Council tend to have more compact meeting times and agenda papers, and an allowance at the lower end of this range will be more suitable.</p>

2.	Academic Staff	<p>Following representations from academic staff members of governance Committees, the Vice-Chancellor has requested that specific consideration be given to Academic Workloads Model (AWM) points allocation from the commencement of Semester Two 2007, for staff who are members of the governance and consultative committees listed in this Code.</p> <p>The AWM has been developed under the terms of Clause 47 of the EBA and can only be amended as a result of an annual review allowed for in the model, and the first of which occurred late in 2007.</p> <p>Given this, it is proposed that staff members participating in governance committees will continue to be allocated points under the 'Service to the University' category from second semester 2007, but with changed conditions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Where a staff member is a member of a central governance committee and the HOS considers that some or all of this committee work is over and above a 10 point allocation (that is the equivalent to half a day per week) for other activities in the category of Service to the University, and the Executive Dean of the Faculty agrees, extra workload points may be allocated for the committee work.</li> <li>▪ This allocation of extra workload points can be in addition to the discretionary allocation that the HOS currently has access to; however, no extra resources will be made available so the School budget must be able to cover this.</li> <li>▪ In an effort to ensure equity of allocation and as a guide for Heads of School, 0.234 points may be allocated for each scheduled meeting which has a planned duration of up to 2 hours, and 0.468 points for each scheduled meeting which has a planned duration from 2 to 4 hours. This is equivalent of four hours of allocated time for the shorter meeting and eight hours of allocated time for meetings with a scheduled duration in excess of two hours.</li> <li>▪ These allocations are not available for Deputy or Associate Deans, Heads of School or others in a management allocation.</li> </ul> <p>The same guidelines may be used for other high workload committees such as ethics committees, but the workload points allocated should be within the discretionary limits currently available to HOS. It is expected that Faculty Board of Study and other committees will fall within the normal Service to the University allocations.</p>
3.	General Staff	<p>General staff who undertake roles on senior governance committees should receive an allowance of 4-6 hours per meeting (inclusive of preparation and travel time) that is clear of standard work duties. Where a general staff member is a member of a senior governance body and an additional associated committee, in recognition of the likely overlap of deliberations, it is suggested that a lesser time allocation be provided (e.g., 2-3 hours per meeting) for the second commitment.</p> <p>* Because the average length of meetings and size of agendas associated with Council, ERB, and committees of the ERB are substantial, an allowance at the upper end of the stated ranges is likely to be more appropriate for these bodies; committees of Council tend to have more compact meeting times and agenda papers, and allowances towards the lower end of these ranges may be more suitable.</p>

In broad terms, staff in senior management roles with substantial allocations of administrative duties (e.g., > 50%) should expect no specific time-release for participation in roles on governance bodies.